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THE

*With the Author's
kind Regards.*

ROMISH REACTION,

AND ITS

PRESENT OPERATION

ON



THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND.

BY

HENRY SOAMES, M.A.,

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THE
ROMISH REACTION.

MANY yet alive remember the riots of 1780, and most elderly people have heard accounts of them from contemporaries. Popular antipathy to Romanism then reached its height, and afterwards regularly declined. Its diminution was not, however, much observable, until the Catholic claims, as they were called, came before the public. Then considerable indifference towards the papal church soon became apparent among laymen in good circumstances. Clergymen generally retained an attitude firmly Protestant so long as the contest lasted, and their polemical activity kept Romish advocates within bounds of exemplary moderation. When the restrictive system fell in 1829, a reaction was to be expected, but such a one has actually occurred, as few would have anticipated, twenty years ago. English Romanism now does not only feel relieved from obloquy and opposition, it boldly challenges publicity. Its edifices rise in all the pomp of architecture; cathedrals are designed; and even under execution; nor have successive exhibitions been without a papal ecclesiastic portrayed in the gaudy vestments of his function. Romish writers, too, have at length attracted popular attention, and the whole papal party has naturally been led by a reaction so

complete, into a tone of triumph, defiance, and expectation.

It has even received encouragement within the Established Church itself in taking this new position. Its principles, rites, and champions, lie no longer under one unbroken mass of clerical neglect, or opposition. The Church of England, rightly understood, approaches, it has been said, very near to that of Rome. Youthful inexperience, apparently, enamoured of ritual pageantry seen abroad, has discovered a disposition to naturalize the like on English ground. Romish formularies have courted public approval with Protestant introductions. The Reformation, though considered as probably requisite, and not schismatical, has been disparaged as a source of injury to religion. Hildebrand, Becket, and Innocent III. have been extolled, Cranmer, Ridley, and Jewel censured. Papal authority to canonise has been tacitly admitted, by giving the saintly title to men who have none but Romish claims to any such distinction. Even the very name of Protestant, in which England, for ages, gloried all but universally, has been treated as a reproach that she should wipe, or explain away.

The reaction, undoubtedly, has not gone to such extremes, except among the younger clergy. The seniors almost in a body stand aloof, surprised and grieved. At least so much as that, may be safely said of nearly all the laity. Hence this movement would require but little notice, were not its admirers anxious to force it on the country generally. As the first step, they clamour for the revival of certain obsolete formalities in public worship. These in

themselves really are so very unimportant, and can often besides plead some sort of authority, that inattention to a general call for them would neither be politic nor reasonable. But the country makes no such call. It is indifferent, or hostile, and much more the latter than the former. It is, in fact, proud of the Church's offices, as they have been immemorially performed. Why risk unpalatable change? Surely, when men are quiescent, and even pleased, it cannot be judicious to thrust among them elements of debate, dissatisfaction, and disgust. Who shall venture to foresee what forms a strife that stirs a nation shall take, what spirits may ride upon it into notice, what havoc may follow in its train? The parties who struck the spark may have meant nothing so little as the flame. In this case, undoubtedly, it is so. The innovators may be warped, half-unconsciously, by a longing for augmented ecclesiastical importance. Apart from this venial frailty, they are wholly above suspicion. But as purity of motive is not always joined with sufficient consideration, it must be desirable to inquire whether present clamour for a new religious face, may not labour under this disadvantage. The cry should really find no hasty countenance; it has been raised before, and most unfortunately for both Church and monarchy.

It is of still more importance from its bearing on the spiritual interests of men; a due regard for these now renders it necessary to give the public generally some means of estimating Romanism. Advocates of that creed might colourably maintain from late events, that English antipathy to it originated in sel-

fishness, and never found support in anything more respectable. Hence opposition to it had no sooner ceased to answer any worldly end, than the force of truth converted men, trained for enemies, into real friends. For such representations, however, there is really but a slender foundation. Assimilations to Romanism are not necessarily Romish. On the contrary, some of the most cherished papal principles may be entertained by those who are both able and willing to use them against the papal church herself. Unwritten tradition, for instance, on which she chiefly leans, has been often shown to be at best a two-edged sword, above her power to meet, when wielded with an able hand. Still, recent approximations to the Church of Rome have been convicted of a dangerous tendency. Some conversions, rather perhaps apostasies, have actually occurred, as every body knows. Any considerable number of these defections may not, indeed, be likely among clergymen, even in quarters most open to misconception. A moderate portion of professional knowledge will discover indefensible points in the Romish system, and a rising disposition to abandon Protestantism may be restrained by marriage, or by dependence upon preferment of some value. But laymen have no such protections. Hence opinions of a Romish cast are no safe candidates for popular approbation. It is true that genuine Protestants may think very differently upon many subjects from extreme holders of reformed opinions. Nor will those who know the Church deny the expediency of spreading sounder impressions upon ecclesiastical questions than have been current in some Protestant bodies. But

unwonted prominence given to tradition, church-authority, sacramental efficacy, ritual observances, and other questions on which Rome relies, is likely to prepare the way for her emissaries, and to divert attention from the vitals of religion. Serious evil may also lurk under a studied extension of ritual formalities. Once engender a prevailing fondness for externals, and Protestant worship may be thought without facilities for satisfying the reasonable cravings of mankind. For such a taste, however, ample gratification is provided in the theatrical rites of Rome. Unless, therefore, Protestants desire some sort of coalition with the papal church, they should, in justice to the weak and uninformed, be very wary of approaches towards her. But coalition would be soon found impracticable. The papacy, though weakened and humbled, still has power and haughtiness enough to demand an unconditional surrender. And her friends may ask, Why should Protestants refuse one?

When inquiring minds would return a well-considered answer to this important question, they soon discern a most unsatisfactory prospect before them. As Romanism rises to the view, really two systems are disclosed; one of which has no defenders, or none of any note: this latter system may, indeed, be disclaimed altogether, without renouncing the Romish communion. Hence Bossuet, whose *Exposition of the Catholic Faith in Matters of Controversy* has become a text-book in papal polemics, would not undertake its advocacy. He pleads for nothing unsanctioned by the wary council of Trent. This determination leaves, however, that superstition undefended, which chiefly makes up the

Romanism of the Romish world. The great Bishop of Meaux's caution, accordingly, occasioned, at first, some dissatisfaction; but its wisdom has been shown by experience, and others have been equally discreet. Appeals are accordingly made by Romish writers to the famous *Exposition*, as a judicious and successful vindication of their creed, from the offensive charges of malice and ignorance. Now, it will be granted readily, that Rome is not chargeable with absurd or pernicious principles or practices, merely because found within her pale. But she must answer, notwithstanding, for very many things, because her authorities regularly sanction them, which the council of Trent has either wholly passed over, or involved in the mist of a prudent obscurity. The Pope would, probably, fence desperately under inquiries as to his belief in *the holy house of Loretto*: yet his own dominions contain that crying outrage upon common sense. Nor, however he and those about him sigh or smile, do any of them doubt that the miserable pilgrims, decoyed by his connivance to Loretto, believe all the ludicrous absurdities in circulation there. Is, then, a church which thus, at its fountain-head, betrays the defenceless populace, to decline responsibility by merely pleading that vulgar credulity must have its way? Why suffer ignorance to be beguiled without an effort to prevent it? Nay: the case is worse. Their spiritual guides carefully beset ignorant worshippers, in all Romish countries, with incentives to superstition, for which, very slender authority, or none at all, was left by the Trentine council. Visitors to France see little of religion there beyond female worship of the Virgin Mary. Yet such

deification has no sufficient conciliar authority. But can this be generally known among the people? Does it not, in fact, appear that superstitious ignorance is deliberately given over to extravagant views of the *Mother of God*, as Mary is ordinarily called? Let a senseless festival, known as her Assumption, be observed on Romish ground. It occurred in 1842, on a Monday, and far more shops were then closed at Caen, the chief town in Lower Normandy, than had been on the day before. The former day, however, was the Lord's, reserved for his service by holy and indubitable sanctions: the latter's claim to notice rests on a mythologic tale of the same authenticity with any told of Cybele or Diana. It is equally disingenuous and vain in Romanists to disclaim such portions of their system as it popularly works. Their church is answerable for all that her established governors have immemorially sanctioned, and still continue to sanction. In face of so much to shock a religious eye in Romish places of worship, it is idle to seek refuge under the council of Trent. If both head and members in the papal church had really opposed popular superstition, endless abuses, yet in high repute, would long have sunk into mere matter of history.

The Roman church must also answer for a speculative doctrine of great practical importance, taught habitually, but notwithstanding insufficiently authorized by her main standard of belief. Protestants promise iniquity no pardon without genuine contrition. Scholastic divines on the other hand, posterior to the twelfth century, have taught sinners to expect security from a servile fear of punishment, unconnected with such love

of goodness as bespeaks a change of mind^a. This they termed *attrition*, and it is represented as effectual, if sealed by priestly absolution, or the desire of it, where that consolation itself is unattainable^b. Thus one man is brought proudly forward as able to supply the obvious deficiencies of another's repentance. Upon the establishment of such a principle clerical influence must necessarily rise, and men willingly concur in establishing it, because they shrink from timely and serious attention to their spiritual affairs. But it is obviously a principle to undermine morality. The council of Trent has not, however, distinctly sanctioned it. When attrition came under the notice of that famous body, little was apparently thought expedient beyond a censure of Luther's views upon the question. The Saxon reformer had branded attrition as essentially hypocritical, and an aggravation of sin^c. The council not only gave him the negative, but pronounced also an attrite state of mind useful for disposing sinners to seek God in the sacrament of penance^d. Sanction from Trent is, notwithstanding, commonly claimed for the scholastic doctrine. Before the council separated a committee was appointed to prepare a manual, for the spreading of its views through Europe. These chosen theologians remained at work until 1566, when the result of their labours was published by papal authority, and has been generally known as the Catechism of the Council of Trent, or in Latin as the *Catechismus ad*

Morinus *De Pœnitentia*. ar. 1651. p. 506.

^b Roffens *adv. Luther*. Wirceb. 1697. p. 339.

^c Chemnic. *Exam. Conc. Trid.* Genev. 1614. p. 186.

^d Conc. Trid. Sess. 14. cap. 4.

Parochos. This compilation, after declaring contrition attainable by very few, speaks of a provision mercifully made to pardon sin *by an easier way*, through the sacerdotal keys*. Here, then, is distinctly recognised a power to make men easy under sin without contrition. Hence an ordinary ecclesiastic may excusably fancy his absolutions to have been deliberately placed upon this exalted ground, by the very council that settled Romish doctrine. But let a competent objector insist upon the evil of lulling conscience while the heart continues hard, and he will hear, what is undeniable, that human salvability through attrition, was really not affirmed at Trent. And it will be argued farther, that a mere committee, which did not complete its task until more than two years after the council separated, wanted sufficient authority to sanction any doctrine not formally established by itself. But is not Rome really compromised by this catechism, which she has circulated, almost three hundred years, as an authentic exposition of her faith? And why should Protestants desire approximation to a system which waylays ignorance with indefensible superstitions, and whispers pardon to unyielding guilt when driven to a priest by slavish fears of punishment? Surely Rome's double dealing in the latter case is of itself enough to make her contact odious. Her clergy are encouraged in tampering with the souls of men, by an authority which they may allowably think unquestionable, but let the question rise, and it is found immediately that any such authority will be sought in vain. Bellarmine

* *Catech. ad Parochos.* p. 2. de Pœn. Sacr. xlv.

would seek refuge from this disingenuous presumption of his church, by asserting that Luther's disciples are equally liberal to sinners merely attrite, whatever the great Saxon reformer himself might have originally taught^f. If it be so, the fact only shows that clergymen are very liable to the fascination of papal principles. Rome has undoubtedly abundant means of ensnaring minds, whether clerical or lay. Hence most men who know the danger will seek to keep both priest and people from the risk of romanising.

Little, however, need be feared for those by whom the Romish system has been searchingly considered. Even its defended portions, which no Romanist can abandon, make but a sorry figure when stripped of adventitious aids. The reaction in their favour calls for some notice of them; and, in taking it, Bossuet's *Exposition* may serve as a guide. This little tract is not only drawn up with admirable skill, but also the use of it involves no personal controversy. The first article in it requiring particular observation is the *Invocation of Saints*. This really means the calling upon various parties deceased, under a notion that they can hear us, and are privileged by God to act as mediators between himself and men. The individuals to whom this power and office are attributed, form a very large and motley company. Some of them were unquestionably saints, others were fanatics, or zealots for monachism, or insane; and names are even found upon the list which cannot be conclusively connected with any real persons whatsoever. But it is needless

^f *De Controversiis*. Col. Agr. 1615. iii. 434.

to enter into particulars before some good reason has been found for any such invocation at all, and even if this were done an inquiring mind might fairly ask, Why we should suppose dead people of any kind able to hear us? Until this question is answered satisfactorily, calls upon the deceased must be liable to a charge of absurdity. The council of Trent, however, which was driven to give some sort of authority for these addresses, has passed over the information necessary to protect them, and, with some verbosity, it has merely enjoined clergymen to teach, that *suppliantly to invoke saints is a good and useful thing*^s. But it is obviously neither, unless the parties invoked can hear. The following is Bossuet's mode of evading this difficulty: "The church, in teaching it is profitable to pray to saints, teaches us to pray to them in the same spirit of charity, and according to the same order of fraternal society, which moves us to demand assistance of our brethren living on the earth^h." The whole meaning of this passage appears to be, that speeches may be made, messages sent, or letters written to a friend who died some time ago, with much about the same reason as to one still upon the earth. After this unpromising introduction, the great Romish controversialist glides off into matters wholly irrelevant, but, at last, he finds himself unable to escape from saying something upon the power of his deceased or imaginary clients to hear what people say to them. Their capacity, he says, for this, may come "from the ministry and commu-

^s Conc. Trid. Sess. 25.

^h *Exposition of the Doctrine of the Catholic Church in matters of Controversie.* Lond. 1735. p. 72.

nication of angels;" or from "God himself making known to them our desires by a particular revelation; or by his discovering the secret to them in his divine essence, in which all truth is comprised¹." The possibility of such things no one will deny; its probability is a very different question, and one that ought certainly to be placed upon some satisfactory footing before ignorant people are taught to assume it in their devotions. Bellarmine would find such a footing in *the infinite miracles, by which saints have shown themselves very often to hear the prayers of the living, and to be both able and willing to aid those who invoke them*¹. Their mode of hearing, he says, is this: *Our prayers reach them, not as they are in our own minds, but as they are in God, whom the saints behold, and who shows to them the supplications of men*^k. These accounts may seem very probable and ingenious to such as will take upon trust an infinite number of unspecified miracles, and a broad assertion made by an interested party who can have no information whatever about the matter. But others, when they see nothing better said for the invocation of saints, may allowably ask with Calvin, Who has let us know that departed spirits *have ears long enough to hear the prayers of men*^l? So hopeless, indeed, is the task of making out any tolerable case upon this question, that Milner represents the council of Trent as "barely teaching that it is *good and profitable to invoke the prayers of saints*," adding, that Romish divines hence consider this practice to rest upon "no

¹ *Exposition*, 79.

^j *Controver.* ii. 297.

^k *Ibid.* 291.

^l *Institut.* iii. 20, sect. 24. Lugd. Bat. 1654. p. 311.

positive law of the church^m." The council, however, did not really go quite so far as the former of these extracts might lead us to believe. It has not formally pledged itself even to the *goodness and profit* of invoking saints: it merely prescribed these topics to ordinary religious teachers. Undoubtedly it did not take a final stand at this prudent but disingenuous point. It went on to condemn those who attack the invocation of saints. Thus this practice, in spite of its insuperable difficulties at the very outset, clings tenaciously to the Romish creed. It is interwoven inseparably with papal worship, making intolerable demands upon the forbearance of enquiring worshippers.

After his advocacy of addresses to the dead, Bossuet pleads in seven verbose pages for images and relics. To neither, he declares, is any worship really allowed, but both, it is maintained, may help popular devotion. This is pagan ground, and was habitually taken by baffled heathenism, in answering the early Christians. As aniently too, images have been called by Romish patrons *the books of unlearned men*. They are so undoubtedly, but Scripture charges them with teaching lies in religionⁿ. Clearly therefore, the very classes for whose reading they are professedly provided; ought to be protected from it. Pains are taken, it is true, to keep the populace from falling through image-worship into rank idolatry; but what precaution could be half so good as the removal of every snare? Instead of this kind and wise consideration, the steps

^m Cited by Mr. Palmer, from the *End of Controversy*, in his Fifth Letter to Dr. Wiseman, p. 31.

ⁿ Hab. ii. 18. Jer. x. 8, 14. Zech. x. 2.

of ignorance in Romish churches are beset with other snares. Relics also lie in wait for popular credulity, and positively render it a laughing-stock. Two or three heads of a single saint, fragments of the cross, enough altogether to build a barge, if not a brig, tinge popery with farce. Friends, hear of such impostures with a smile, but image-worship can summon up the burning blush of shame. How can an ingenuous Romanist face a decalogue curtailed either wholly, or in part, of the second commandment? Yet such decalogues abound^o, and amount, undoubtedly to a plea of guilt on a charge of idolatry. To escape from the misery of dwelling on such mutilations, a discussion is commonly provoked upon ancient modes of dividing the commandments. But this is merely flying off into literary antiquarianism, and leaves in all its force the serious question, Where is God's prohibition of bowing down to graven images?

Images and relics can, however, have no great attractions for masculine understandings. Their importance requires gross apprehensions, and a childish fondness for glittering toys. But a belief in purgatory, which may next be noticed, acts powerfully upon the whole Romish world, and is highly profitable as a source of sacerdotal revenue. It is, notwithstanding, a doctrine for which the council of Trent could find no satisfactory foundation. Mention is, indeed, made of scriptural authority, reinforced by Fathers and councils, but no clue is given to the passages intended^p.

^o See the Author's *History of the Reformation*, ii., 529, 530; iii., 298; | iv., 488; and *Bampton Lectures*, 242. | ^p Conc. Trid. Sess. 25, cap. 1.

Such a mode of affirming an important principle must appear suspicious to discerning minds, even untinged with scholarship. Readers of theology are aware that no better matter was producible. The council naturally distrusted Scripture for its purpose. The Fathers offer much bearing upon purgatory, but nothing definite or consistent. Earlier councils had sanctioned prayers for the dead, but purgatorial pains after death first received conciliar authority at Florence, in 1439, while the great-grandfathers of those who deliberated at Trent were actually alive. Having such scanty and unmanageable materials, Bossuet contents himself with the following argument in favour of a posthumous purgation:—"Those who depart this life in grace and charity, but nevertheless indebted to the divine justice some pains which it reserved, are to suffer them in the other life. This is what obliged all the primitive Christians to offer up prayers, alms-deeds, and sacrifices, for the faithful who departed in peace, and in the communion of the church, with an assured faith that they could be assisted by these means^a." Neither of these assertions, narrow and wary as are both, is worthy of any great attention. It has not been established upon careful investigation, either that any penalties hereafter are to be expected by such as die in the peace of God, or that services for the dead in early times originated in a desire to relieve them from purgatorial pains. Here again, therefore, is very little temptation to romanise. A doctrine which enslaves the Romish world, and has overleaped all reasonable

^a *Expos.* 102.

demands upon the purse, was never solemnly affirmed until the fifteenth century, and could find at Trent no better notice than one that effectually condemns it.

Transubstantiation has been treated by the council more at length: it is, indeed, vital to the Romish faith, and hence could not be hastily dismissed. It is the doctrine, in fact, on which depends the *Mass*, that service of which we chiefly hear in papal churches. The word *mass*, which is of disputed origin, means no more than the communion-service. The primitive Christians communicated even daily as an act of ordinary devotion, and this practice, it appears, had not grown unusual in the west when the fifth century began^r. Romanists, therefore, in their principal service, only continue constantly facilities of which the people have not taken advantage, except occasionally, during fourteen hundred years. They merely cling to a shadow, after parting with the substance. They come habitually to the communion, but never think of communicating more than about once in every year. Yet the service, frequented so inconsistently, was evidently written for a congregation of communicants^s, and anciently, none who did not mean communion, were allowed within the church, while the Holy Supper was administered^t. Now, that sacred mystery is made by Romanists into a mere theatrical shew, which friends consider an imposing ceremony, and which may be so when expensively conducted, but which enemies have often thought little better than downright mummery. To justify

Bona *De Rebus Liturgicis*. Par. | ^r *Ibid.* 99.
1672. p. 479. | ^s *Ibid.*

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this continuance of a primitive service, under a total departure from the practice which occasioned it, a notion has arisen, that the priest, who really does receive, offers a sacrifice for quick and dead. Thus Romanists usually decline their obvious duty when present at the sacrament, under a belief that another is, in a certain degree, receiving for them, reckoning not only upon their own advantage from this vicarious religion, but also thinking that it may benefit absent and departed friends. This mode, likewise, of attending the communion has the attractions of requiring no great preparation, and of involving but little responsibility. Another notion that brings Romish non-communicants to gaze habitually on eucharistic ministrations, is that of worshipping the Saviour sensibly present. Formerly, most members of the papal church understood literally our Lord's words, "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you^u." Some, indeed, had doubts of this interpretation, but all thought the eucharist, if not absolutely necessary to salvation, yet so very important, that it was administered to infants immediately after baptism. The literal sense of this text, however, was abandoned universally in the twelfth century, or thereabouts, and the communion of infants then gradually wore out. Our Lord's words in instituting the Holy Supper have been differently treated among Romanists, being tenaciously construed in a sense strictly literal. This makes the eucharistic elements, after consecration, to be considered really as

^u St. John vi. 25.

an incarnation of the Deity, veiled under the forms of bread and wine. To greet with some degree of propriety, a presence so august, at well-appointed masses, bewitching music fills the ear, perfume regales the nostrils, and gaudy dresses please the eye, while unceasing movements will not let attention flag.

Yet reasons for doubting this alleged incarnation are both obvious and cogent. Scripture denies it any sufficient countenance, as is plain from the operation of Bible-reading upon ordinary Protestants. They have no prejudice against transubstantiation, very few among them having ever heard of it. Notwithstanding, their habitual perusal of the sacred volume never leads them to suspect it. In those divine words by which Romanists would prove it, a parallel is merely seen with other passages, in which Jesus figures himself as a door, a vine, or something else that literally he could never be. This view is so reasonable, and will apply so solidly to the particular case, that Bishop Fisher, the illustrious victim of Henry VIII., ingenuously admits the impossibility of proving transubstantiation from the bare words of Scripture. He rests the efficiency of texts adduced for it upon interpretations given to them by the Fathers^x. Other candid Romanists have made similar concessions^y. Protestants, however, consider these patristic confirmations as nothing more than rhetorical embellishments, and produce, to prove them such, adverse passages from the very same

^x Joh. Fish. Roff. Ep. Opp. Wirceb. 1597. col. 227.

^y See Archbishop Tillotson's Ser-

mons, Lond. 1742, ii. 202. Cosin. *Historia Transubstantiationis Papalis*, Lond. 1675, p. 161.

authors. Indisputably the Fathers offer both fact and figure on the eucharistic presence. The question turns upon which is one, and which the other. Where Protestants decide for figure, Romanists can only see fact, and without collateral evidence it is impossible to determine which party has taken the more probable side. Upon such evidence the Protestant opinion can make an effectual stand. Bellarmine could find no objectors to the doctrine of transubstantiation before the eighth century, and even then he merely infers their existence from some words used in the controversy on image-worship^z. Yet, if such a vent for party spirit had existed, it could scarcely have been so long overlooked. Mental inactivity did not characterize the times. Christians were constantly disputing. There is really, however, no trace of their disputes upon the corporal presence until the ninth century. Some belief of the kind had, probably, become current before, but no divine is known to have embodied it in writing, until this was done, about the year 818, by Paschasius Radbert, a French monk, eventually Abbot of Corbey. Still that writer, of whom great notice has consequently been taken both by Romanists and Protestants, does by no means go far enough for the papal church. His authority has, in fact, been produced against her^a. He makes transubstantiation, or perhaps rather, impanation, depend upon faithful receiving; a principle ruinous to the adoration ceremonies of a modern Romish mass. Of his work's adverse

^z *Controv.* iii. 152.

^a *Catalogus Testium veritatis*,
1608, col. 1083. Cosin. 88.

operation upon these formalities, no proof, indeed, can be given more decisive than Archbishop Parker's insertion, in the Twenty-ninth Article of the Church of England^b, of the very passage from St. Austin, which guided Radbert's view of the question. His work, notwithstanding, occasioned such a ferment, that Charles the Bald, King of the Franks, desired Ratramn and John Scot, two of the best contemporary scholars, to examine it. They did so, and condemned it. Radbert's doctrine was besides pronounced *an error and a novelty*^c, by another contemporary, at least equal in scholarship to the former two, and superior in station. This was Raban Maur, the famous Archbishop of Mentz, whose testimony as to *novelty*, at least, must be unimpeachable, and it involves the charge of error. That could be no article of the Christian faith, which a competent authority pronounced *new* in the ninth century, and if such a doctrine as transubstantiation, or impanation, had really been otherwise than new, it could hardly have been received in silence until so late a period. Its novelty has been still more formally established by the ancient Church of England, which authorized a paschal homily, embodying a large portion of Ratramn's tract against Radbert. This decisive blow to the doctrine of transubstantiation comes, probably, from the pen of Elfric. Under that impression,

^b The passage is more clearly against transubstantiation as originally written by St. Austin. The printed texts of that father are incorporated in this passage with an ancient gloss, which weakens the

original sense. See the Author's *Bampton Lectures*, 404.

^c Pœnit. Rhab. Archiep. Mogunt. in tom. *Insignium Auctorum tam Græcorum quam Latinorum*. Ingolst. 1616.

Johnson of Cranbrook very reasonably says, "I am fully persuaded, that the homilies of Elfric are more positive against transubstantiation, than the homilies of the Church of England compiled in the reigns of Edward VI. and Queen Elizabeth^d."

When pressed by such attacks, which are fatal to their system, Romanists commonly begin to talk of the real presence. If this be admitted by an adversary, they seek to mystify and confuse him by subtle speculations upon the manner of it. But all such niceties are irrelevant. A real presence to faithful receivers is no matter for the exercise of human ingenuity, nor does it countenance the uses made of the Lord's table in a Romish mass. Christ may be truly present to the receiving priest, if properly prepared, without impressing a divine character upon such of the consecrated elements as are not received. With even those actually taken, and under proper circumstances, there is no reason for imputing to them such a presence, as justifies their elevation over the officiator's head, for a congregation to worship. What shall then be said of adoring sacramental substances not received at all? This is evidently a gross perversion of the eucharistic feast, and it renders the attendance of non-communicants greatly more objectionable now, than it would have been when such persons were excluded from the Church. But besides the palpable abuses of their communion-service, Romanists reserve the consecrated elements for production at other times. They are then wholly out of place, and as if to render this

^d Pref. to Johnson's Collection. Lond. 1720. xx.

glaringly conspicuous, nothing can look more absurd, than the bowing of heads by which they are saluted. Even when a priest is duly consecrating, or saying mass, in Romish phrase, there is no likelihood of any eucharistic presence, when he is unfit for a devout receiving. Now, if this were very uncommon among their incessant masses, the papal clergy must be more than men. Thus the adoration ceremonies are liable to become quite indefensible, at the only time when there is a pretence for considering them lawful. These formalities ought to guide every disputant upon transubstantiation, and never to be suffered out of sight. Eucharistic questions between Rome and the Reformation, do not turn upon the inscrutable operations of heavenly grace, but upon the reality of such a presence as renders consecrated bread and wine legitimate objects of religious worship.

In considering the recent reaction, other questions will be found of secondary importance. There are various principles which Romanists and Protestants hold in common, though their actual opinions upon them are very different. Probably, well-informed and intelligent men of the two creeds, discussing such points candidly together, would soon show strong approximations towards each other. There is no occasion, for instance, to anticipate much difference upon an enumeration of the sacraments. All the seven ministrations, which bear a sacramental character among Romanists, have some sort of place in the Church of England, with the exception of extreme unction, and even this was admitted in King Edward's first service-book. The term sacrament has, in fact,

been treated by the Anglican reformers as merely technical, and theologians may, therefore, allowably differ upon the application of it. Meaning properly the sensible sign of some holy thing, it was applied anciently to the several substances used in baptism, confirmation, and the Lord's Supper. These being four, namely, water, chrism, bread, and wine, the sacraments were said to be four*. They were subsequently pronounced seven, school divinity having introduced a fashion for septenaries. The Church of England has left mere technicality untouched, asserting no more, than that five of the Romish sacraments "are not to be counted for sacraments of the Gospel," not having, "like nature of sacraments with baptism and the Lord's Supper†." Upon this principle, the Catechism declares the sacraments to be "two only, as generally necessary to salvation;" leaving divines to describe in their own way religious forms not "generally necessary to salvation;" which is the obvious and admitted position of some rites termed sacraments by Romanists. Calm discussion, therefore, between Romanist and Protestant, would be likely to leave the two parties at no long distance from each other in enumerating sacraments. It is useless to take much notice of satisfactions for sin, or indulgences, until the doctrine of purgatory, on which they chiefly depend, is placed upon definite and solid ground. A belief in cleansing fires after death calls, indeed, for another Romish principle, namely, that divine justice will

* Rab. Maur. *De Instituendis* | † Art. 25.
Clericis. Col. 1532, p. 37.

exact a temporal penalty for every sin, although the eternal punishment may be mercifully remitted through sacramental agency. But still, take away purgatory, and the whole structure falls, it being obvious, that absolution is a mockery to one who has lived sinfully until life is all but closed, unless posthumous pains wring the satisfaction from him, which hitherto he has not paid, but which, he is told, no offender can escape. Thus a very large portion of the Romish system hinges mainly upon purgatory, a point which the council of Trent was driven to dismiss in the most brief, cautious, and unsatisfactory manner. It was not very explicit, even upon the famous question of indulgences, merely declaring the power of granting them to have been divinely conferred upon the Church, to have been exercised from the earliest times, and to be very wholesome to the people^a. Thus Romanists may go back, if they please, to the primitive system of making an indulgence nothing more than a relaxation of penance imposed for some public scandal, and accelerating the time of absolution. Upon this principle, if ancient discipline could be restored, Protestants will allow that such a grace, discreetly dispensed, might often be advantageous. Papal indulgences, according to the letter, would be consistent with this principle, if they preceded absolution^b. By following it, popular superstition, under countenance from some writers in divinity, and general connivance, has been led into a belief, needing hellebore, Calvin

^a Sess. 25.

^b Mr. Palmer's Seventh Letter to Dr. Wiseman, 24.

says, rather than argumentⁱ, that indulgences will release from the penalties of sin, both here and hereafter.

No such expectations would prevail among Romanists, if their belief were securely fixed upon the rock of Scripture, and habitually tested by that infallible standard. But among them God's word is divided into two parts, the written and the unwritten, pronounced equally worthy of reverence and reliance^j, and both necessary for the correct understanding of each other. For the portion of this twofold revelation, unrecorded in Scripture, inquirers are referred to the remains of ecclesiastical antiquity^k, to the wide circle, that is, of councils and fathers. Thus, instead of seeking their faith in the Bible alone, a book of manageable size that has undergone innumerable searching inquiries, Romanists are to look for it besides in a great number of books, presenting all those difficulties of text, language, allusion, and construction, that embarrass readers of the ancient classics. This enormous and multifarious mass of authority, though rather the master of Scripture than supplemental to it, is obviously open to very few even of the clergy, and reference to it, accordingly, must, in most cases, be either idle pretence, or artful subterfuge. The sacred Record, in one or more of the ancient languages, with some well-established aids for the study of it, can be procured and used by most ministers of religion: but a creed largely founded upon tradition is only to be

ⁱ *Inst.* iv. 5. p. 231.
^j *Conc. Trid. Sess.* 4.

^k Bellarm. *Controv.* i. 82.

critically known by a scholar, here and there. Most men who seek for proofs of it must be contented with partial extracts, and run the risk of depending upon some that are positively spurious. There are many such passages in editions of the Fathers, especially in the older editions, and Romish polemics even still venture, or stumble, upon the use of them¹.

Besides objections to traditional articles of faith from ordinary men's utter inability to judge of them accurately, the Bible itself really destroys their credit. Bellarmine observes, that religious principles and rites always existed in the world, though seemingly not placed upon record before Moses, and even then only for the Jews, who, after all, had little means of using the written word until Ezra^m. From these premises he argues, that Scriptures without traditions are neither simply necessary nor sufficient. If collateral facts be considered, it might be inferred rather that sound religion requires the protection of an authentic record. Abraham left his paternal home, under Divine direction, because idolatry, as it seems, infected it. His posterity, we know, were continually gliding into this false doctrine, notwithstanding a series of wonderful providences to preserve them from it, down to the very days of Ezra. The evil appears to have reached its height, when authentic copies of the written Word, by some accident or management, had been withdrawn from public viewⁿ. Nor did idolatry, then firmly possessed of every other country, relax its hold upon

¹ Mr. Palmer's Fifth Letter to Dr. Wiseman, p. 16.

^m *Controv.* i. 68.

ⁿ 2 Kings xxii. 8.

Judea, until Ezra settled the canon of Scripture, and synagogues were universally established. In these the written Word was habitually read, and with such extreme scrupulosity^o as to engender a suspicion that apostasy had formerly been encouraged, by spurious or glossed and garbled Scriptures. Thus the Old Testament, and its collateral history, offer one consistent mass of testimony to the danger of admitting the traditional principle in religion without extreme caution. In the New Testament we may learn this danger from the lips of our Saviour himself^p. Besides this, the New Testament bears powerful indirect witness against unwritten tradition. In advocating the claims of tradition to confidence, Bellarmine states the occasional calls to which we owe the four Gospels^q, and every attentive reader can see that such gave us the Epistles. Now these facts prove the insufficiency of oral revelations. An Apostle, or apostolical teacher, had no sooner turned his back upon a congregation than errors arose which could only be stayed by writing, although the party himself was yet alive, and within reach of reference. His testimony, or doctrine, might even be embodied in writing by some one else from memory, and yet want sufficient accuracy. Thus ordinary newspaper intelligence, however carefully provided, is rarely found strictly correct by persons cognizant of the facts. It was, undoubtedly, to remedy the evils, actually experienced from want of written

^o *The Synagogue and the Church*,
by the Rev. J. L. Bernard. Lond.
1842. p. 126.

^p St. Matt. xv. 6. St. Mark vii. 9.

^q *Controv.* i. 69.

documents, that Apostles and Evangelists were inspired to pen such, and there is every reason to believe that heavenly motions would not leave them until their task was performed sufficiently. They had been much misrepresented while alive: this injury, therefore, was neither likely to cease at their deaths, nor the evil of it then to be overlooked by a wakeful Providence. Hence we may infer the sufficiency of Scripture. The necessity for it took very little time to show itself. Papias, bishop of the Phrygian Hierapolis, according to Irenæus, a disciple of St. John, and an intimate friend of Polycarp, wrote a work in five books, extant in the time of Trithemius^r, professing to detail much that he had heard of our Lord and his Apostles, from the very best authorities. But whatever opportunities of information he might have had, from a conspicuous inferiority of understanding, his credit^s never stood very high; still, he succeeded in establishing, during many ages, a general belief in the doctrine of a millennium, which had obtained currency among the Jews, and was most probably brought by converts of that nation into the church^t. Even yet visionary minds cling to this tradition, although most men have long abandoned it. Its pedigree is, however, unusually perfect, being traced up to St. John, then descending orally to Papias, by whom it was written down^u. Those, therefore, who reject it must act rather unreasonably

^r Ob. 1516. Moreri.

^s Euseb. *Ecl. Hist.* iii. 39. Amst. 1695. i. 90.

^t Mosheim *De Rebus Christianis*

ante Constant. Helmst. 1753. p. 721.

^u Conference between Chillingworth and Lewgar. Lond. 1687. p. 89.

in believing traditions not half so well authenticated. Other contributions to a traditional system may have been made by weak and credulous men, like Papias; others, again, by men who were ignorant, rash, prejudiced, artful, or superstitious, rather than indiscreet and vain. It is impossible that such a huge and miscellaneous pile as the Fathers have built should want materials of all these kinds. Thus tradition is evidently unequal to bear the weight imposed upon it by Rome, but it is, undoubtedly, often highly valuable as a scriptural interpreter, and as an authority for discipline, or usage; though even in these cases its range is too wide, and its voice too uncertain, for conclusive operation.

The tradition, however, to which Rome really owes her peculiarities, is of no religious value, being essentially Pagan. It is to be found in the Fathers, because a fatal compromise was early made between heathenism and Christianity. Platonic philosophy was admitted to an insidious alliance with the Gospel, and Christian ministers easily became consenting parties, because they found the patchwork popular, and conducive to their own interest and importance. To this alliance Rome obviously owes those appeals to the dead, ordinarily known as the invocation of saints. Heathenism is founded upon the principle of acknowledging a supreme Deity, who is inaccessible, or nearly so, unless through some of his most favoured servants. The mediators adopted, though differently and variously named, are evidently Noah and his family, the common ancestors of mankind, whose favour with God is thought undeniable from their wonderful preservation in the

ark^x. It is to the departed spirits of these venerated personages, both male and female, that Pagan worship fain would mount, in hope of securing their interest with the Great Supreme. With that exalted Being himself, undoubtedly, the deified subordinates are confounded by heathen ignorance. And Romish ignorance often goes to strange extremes in this way, as to the canonized subordinates of the papal creed, especially as to the Virgin Mary. Invocation takes, in fact, exactly the same ground in both cases, and must have, therefore, a common origin. It is creature-worship, adopted from traditions of unknown antiquity, as the best mode of approaching Omnipotence^y. Romanists have done no more than change the tutelary mediators, and talk of canonizing instead of deifying. Enlightened heathens disclaim a proper polytheism, just as much as well-informed Romanists do the literal worship of saints. The religious use of images is another undeniable graft from a Pagan stock upon papal belief. It is the same with Romish justifications of this insidious and antichristian abuse. Every Romish argument, or sophistical pretence rather, in its favour, may be found in Pagan writers. In the face of these facts, it was gratuitous presumption in the second council of Nice to rest image-worship on Christian tradition. This was, however, the time and way in which the traditional principle was first formally affirmed among Christians. It was, therefore, originally placed as a religious authority

^x See Faber's *Horæ Mosaicæ*,
sect. 1.

^y Cudworth's *Intell. Syst.* 468.

independent of Scripture, upon grounds palpably false, and as a suitable pendant to this rashness, the council anathematized such as made light of traditional sanctions when alleged by the Church^a. Purgatory is another gentile tradition, as will be plain to any one who merely remembers a well-known passage in Virgil^a. One familiar form of the doctrine current among oriental heathens, is the transmigration of souls for purifying and penal purposes. Nor is this form incompatible with Romanism; the council of Trent having merely asserted purgatory, without determining any thing as to the place or manner of it. Romanists, therefore, like Hindoos, may seek it in this world, and consider themselves bound by a Brahminical tenderness for all animated nature. They may conscientiously shudder at inflicting an injury upon any thing alive, for fear of augmenting the misery of some being, once human, perhaps a relation of their own, now undergoing purgatorial transmigration. Such scruples were actually entertained among the ancient Manichees, but not pushed so far as to include men's more minute animal tormentors. Inviolability for these might be inconvenient, though not to the insects; and on this account, probably, they were considered as exempted from purgatorial functions. Some, however, have attributed their exemption to a belief that they were not big enough to hold human souls^b. The transmigration scheme yet flourishes among the Romish

^a Bellarm. *Controv.* i. 72.

^a Æn. vi. 735. See Mosheim. *Eccl. Hist.* new ed. i. 460.

^b Mosheim. *De Rebb. Christ. ante Const.* 869.

peasantry of western Ireland, who believe seals to be antediluvians under penance^c.

The principle of tracing Romish traditions to elder Paganism fails in the case of transubstantiation. But it is a doctrine indelibly stamped with marks of a Pagan origin and growth. Way was made for it, and for all the various demands upon human credulity with which Christians eventually complied, so early as the second century^d. Many heathens of the Platonic school then embraced outwardly the Gospel, but generally with a view of reconciling it with their old philosophy. Thus Christian principles received a base alloy from gentilism, which lowered their standard almost everywhere, down to the time of the Reformation, and still debases it in the majority of churches. While superior minds were thus daily growing more and more debauched by an unscriptural cast of thought, converts of a grosser kind were gained by connivance at their old superstitions, under new names, and adapted, with some improvements, to the calls of Christian worship. Thus the Church rapidly put on a semi-Pagan face, and ground was firmly laid for the ultimate prevalence of usages and opinions that would have shocked many of those who sowed incautiously the seed from which they sprang. To this heathen poison, ever insidiously at work, must be attributed the unscriptural notions, and rhetorical exaggerations, found in the fathers, and rendering them so invaluable to Rome. They have, accordingly, afforded her, though interspersed with

^c Hall's *Ireland*. iii, 408.

^d Mosheim, *De Rebb. Christ. ante Const.* 310.

matter of an opposite kind, plausible grounds for establishing that eucharistic doctrine which desecrates and perverts the Lord's Supper. It is true, that her modern abuses of this holy sacrament were unknown, until Paganism had disappeared by name from Europe. Traces of it were, however, to be seen in all parts of the church-service, and current religious principles had been so thoroughly amalgamated with it, that, under cover of two or three such centuries of darkness as ushered in the millenary year, there was no difficulty in rooting transubstantiation, or any other doctrine attractive to a superstitious people, and an aspiring clergy.

There are those, perhaps, who would excuse the Pagan face, unquestionably worn by Rome, in consideration of the triumphs over human selfishness to which she can proudly point. Admiration not unmixed with envy, dwells upon the glorious churches, and spacious monasteries with which she covered every region that has owned her sway. Her power, however, here, does not seem to have exceeded that of elder heathenism. St. Peter's is, undoubtedly, a nobler pile than the pyramids of Egypt, but only as a work of art; as an evidence of profound obedience to religious calls, it has no such superiority. From Paganism also came the stupendous relics of Egyptian Thebes, the temple of Belus, once at Babylon, that of Diana, once at Ephesus, the caves of Elephanta and Salsette, in India, the ruined memorials of Mexican superstition, and a variety of works, colossal though rude, found over half the world. Others, with no eye for majestic monuments, would envy Rome her ascetic piety. But she can boast of nothing here, that has not been

equalled, if not surpassed, by Paganism. The Brahminical faith still exacts penances in Hindostan almost incredible; no monk or hermit, certainly, ever taxed his nature farther.

That spectacles of imposing magnificence and perfect self-denial have gained popularity both for the Pagan and the Romish systems, cannot be doubted. But human nature seeks allurements also of a more solid and personal kind. Of those provided by Gentilism it is needless to speak. The papal church provides them abundantly in her exaggerated views of ministerial privileges, and sacramental efficacy. Clergymen are naturally pleased with admitted notions of extraordinary power over the souls of other people, descending to them indefeasibly from the Apostles. They are thus at once invested with a factitious importance that requires neither professional eminence, nor ministerial industry. By the laity, undoubtedly, such pretensions are very liable to be questioned; but upon the whole, where there is any previous preparation for them, they will commonly be well received. Reconciliation above through another's instrumentality is the very doctrine for human indolence and corruption. The wife, who had been contentedly or contemptuously left to seek a deity of her own sex in the Virgin Mary, would often find no difficulty in persuading a dying husband to receive a priest, and go through the forms that have the credit of unlocking heaven.

Such tardy recourse to her presumed authority does, however, no more than confirm the power of Rome. Its main stay is habitual confession. Among

Protestants, a clergyman of distinguished virtue and abilities now and then gives law to a district, or even to a nation. In the papal church, spiritual despotism is attainable by ordinary minds. The prying confessional, always debasing and impertinent, often indecent, enslaves every one who enters it, and gives opportunities to an artful priest of instilling notions that will not bear publicity. Whatever may be the occasional value of such an engine, its establishment is hopeless among those who require Scripture for their faith. Even Romanists, bred as they are to periodical moral exposure, would not undergo it, were it not believed a *way* to secure the soul *more easy* than genuine contrition. Protestants have no catechism, bearing a great appearance of authority, like that of Trent, to lull their consciences with hopes of such *easier ways*. Nor would habitual reading of the Bible give any such a prospect of their confidence. These facts are decisive against sacerdotal hopes of a power over the people like that gained among Romanists. It is unattainable without auricular confession; which can only be established upon general ignorance of Scripture.

Whatever expectations, therefore, sanguine spirits may entertain, neither the Romish system, nor any variation of it, has a chance of superseding the sound Protestantism of England. If the recent reaction were more decided, general enquiry would soon array solid conviction instead of blind prejudice against Romanism. Ignorance has lately befriended the papal church, but its aspect could not become seriously threatening, without placing the materials for exposing it, which abound in libraries, within every

reader's reach. An increased attention to the Romish controversy need, however, involve no revival of old antipathies, or even a wish for political exclusions. Men may carefully consider the opinions of others without claiming any undue advantage for their own, or depreciating those whom they cannot convince. When such consideration is connected with recent Protestant movements, it may be useful to remark that Romish peculiarities have been commonly introduced upon one ground, and retained upon another. Principles, or occasions wore out, but usages that arose from them were continued, and rendered available for purposes entirely new. Rome's penitential system originated in the formal retention of primitive discipline, after it could really be enforced no longer. Purgatory, the invocation of supposed inferior mediators, the worship of images, and various formalities were favourably received by Christians anxious to conciliate Paganism. The necessity for this conciliation came to an end, but principles and usages connived at for its sake, remained. Specious apologies gave them shelter, until they gained a firm footing in the church, and leavened all her doctrine. Hence came Mahometanism, the sanction of image-worship and assertion of the traditional principle, that render the deutero-Nicene council infamous, together with the sacrilegious mutilation of the decalogue, that has rendered its infamy so palpable. Hence came also an interminable brood of debasing and stupid superstitions, leading eventually and necessarily to a restraint upon Bible reading. These foul blots embarrass and shame papal advocates, and it should not be forgotten, that such confusion has

overtaken them, because their church would not abandon things that had wholly lost their use. The lawfulness, and even expediency of admitting some, or all of these things were most questionable at first. But good men thought favourably of them for the serving of a temporary purpose. The purpose was served, when unhappily connivance was found to have secured permanent possession. Again, it was the church's bounden duty to spread the holy table whenever communicants could be found. But preparation of the table constantly, when communicants could only be found occasionally, has led men into talking of propitiatory sacrifice, disposed them for believing transubstantiation, and given occasion for converting the holy Supper into a dramatic exhibition. By these devices, a new interest has been created for the neglected eucharist, and people witness a glaring abuse under a notion of giving due attendance to a divine institution. In like manner, it was but common sense to provide a Latin liturgy for those who spoke the language, and nothing else would have contented them. But to continue this very service when the language had grown out of use, was neither sense nor justice. It was more inexcusable still to introduce it among people whose tongue had not even a Latin origin, and who, therefore, could not so much as guess the meaning of their public prayers. They must have looked upon them as little else than powerful and mysterious charms. In these days, undoubtedly, Romanists have prayer-books with vernacular translations. But many people even now cannot read, or obtain books, whereas all can understand what is plainly read to them in their

own language, and few things are more pleasing than the attention given to an interesting lesson in a Protestant church. The humble Romanist however is denied this gratification and advantage from the obstinacy of his church in retaining that which had been once adopted, and which, in this case, must have rendered public worship unintelligible to nearly all but the clergy, during those many centuries when books were uncommon, and readers too. More details of this kind are unnecessary. Rome has obviously erred from adherence to form after the spirit had evaporated.

Her infirmity and its results deserve serious consideration from those of the Anglican communion, who fondly picture to themselves long disused formalities, and insist upon realising the cherished image: nay more, of carrying all England in their train. Undoubtedly the ground which they wish to take is not exactly that on which the papal church has placed herself. She seemingly made no innovation. Practice continued, while principle gradually and imperceptibly changed. England is to reverse these things. Change is to affect practice only, and for no other purpose, than to invigorate the very principles that gave it birth. Experience, however, discourages interference with established habit from a view to some advantage merely hypothetical; and practice generally grows out of date, because its use is gone. Some of the proposed revivals of obsolete usages are also liable to objection, from the uncertainty of their establishment in the church at any time. Nothing is less carefully recorded than that which passes under every man's daily observation. Hence the very things that were universally known in

one age, are often investigated with doubt and difficulty by another. This is the case with England's church-service. Full accounts of its habitual celebration at an early period of its existence, have not been produced. An inquirer finds nothing positive to guide him beyond a notice here and there. He is, therefore, left very much to inference from a consideration of rubrics, injunctions, canons, and acts of parliament. A due consideration and comparison of these has not, however, proved very favourable to the party bent upon alteration. Charges of departure from prescribed practice have been most imperfectly established. They seem to have been often made, in fact, with little farther preparation than the reading of some rubrics, without even a careful comparison of all the rubrics together, and without much thought of collateral documents. Hence rubrical inconsistencies, that really are obvious enough, have been overlooked, and immemorial usage has been taxed with a degree of deviation from original sanctions that cannot be substantiated. It is undoubtedly true, that every liturgical arrangement, left by Edward or Elizabeth, is not still in use. But it is equally true, that existing arrangements vary much less than many people fancy from those originally made, and that most of the actual variations are traceable either to legislative interference, or the uncontrollable tide of national habits and opinions.

The liturgical history of Protestant England properly dates from 1548, under Edward VI. A committee of divines then prepared a vernacular service-book, chiefly from the old Latin offices; of which the most objectionable parts were all removed. The new

liturgy was approved by convocation, confirmed by act of parliament, in January, 1549, and brought statutably into general use on the following Whitsunday. It is divided into matins, evensong, a collection of introits, or introductory psalms, with collects, epistles, and gospels, for Sundays and holy-days; "the Supper of the Lord and holy Communion, commonly called the Mass;" the Litany and suffrages; public and private baptism, Confirmation, prefaced by a Catechism extending to the Lord's Prayer; Matrimony, the Visitation and Communion of the Sick; Burial, the Purification of women, and "the First Day of Lent," being the service afterwards called a Commination against Sinners^c.

The compilers were evidently anxious to avoid all unnecessary deviation from established forms. Hence they provided for each day, two secondary services, answering to two of the canonical hours, and a principal service, or mass, besides, for Sundays and holy-days. The secondary services, called matins and evensong respectively, are short, beginning with the Lord's Prayer, and ending with the third collect, that for grace. These services, therefore, want the sentences, exhortation, confession, absolution, four prayers after the third collect, and benediction. No provision is made for a sermon at either of them, and both were evidently meant for services by themselves, to be used one at an early hour of the morning, the other towards the decline of day. For the principal service, or mass, the congregation probably assembled at nine o'clock in the morning, or thereabouts. It opened on Sundays,

^c Cardwell's *Two Books of Common Prayer compared*.

Wednesdays, and Fridays, with the Litany, which was no longer to be said in procession about the church, or churchyard, or both, but in the body of the church, by the priest and his assistants, on their knees. This regulation is not, however, strictly rubrical, but depends upon one of Edward's injunctions, issued in 1547, which was approved in the rubric, with a discretionary power to the crown to change it. The reasons given for thus interfering with established usage, are that inconveniences had been found in forming processions, from an over-politeness, in some, and a disposition to contend for precedence, in others, and that an ambulatory choir made itself but imperfectly understood by the congregation. When the Litany was over, the priest was to robe himself in a plain white alb, or narrow-sleeved surplice, over which he was to put a cope, or gaudy dress for the back, and then go to the altar. He was there to say the Communion office, or mass. This began with the Lord's Prayer, and the collect yet used. Then followed the Introit, or introductory psalm for the day, three short addresses for mercy, the hymn that now stands before the final blessing, the mutual benedictions of priest and people, the collect for the king, that for the day, the epistle and gospel, and the Nicene creed; which was to be followed by a sermon, or homily, or by a prescribed exhortation to the communion. This ended, one or more of the offertory sentences were to be read or sung, which were to be succeeded, when there was no communion, by one of the collects yet found at the

¹ Sparrow's *Collection*. 7.

end of the office, and the blessing. The prayer now known as that for the Church-militant, is chiefly taken from the canon of the mass, or Romish prayer of consecration, and is joined with the rest of the consecration prayers. It could not be, therefore, used without a communion. When one was administered, instead of a cope, the officiating priest might wear a vestment, or loose robe, reaching from the neck to the feet, and admitting of great variety, both in colour and ornament. It was often made of velvet, or satin, of a blue, red, or green colour, and figured with images, arms, stars, or flowers: even pearls occasionally adding to its gay and gorgeous appearance^b.

These arrangements were evidently prescribed with a view to conciliate Romish prejudice. Men might come to church and join in a service very much like that which they had ever known there, only as it was anciently at Rome, such as every body could understand; weeded also of addresses to dead persons, in all probability out of hearing, and freed from several cumbrous formalities. Farther tenderness for inveterate habit was displayed in Edward's first service-book, by directing the preparation of circular unleavened cakes for the communion, but something larger than the ancient hosts, in order that each of them might be broken for distribution into two or more pieces; and by directing water to be mingled with the eucharistic wine. Auricular confession was also allowed, though

^a The whole is called the *Canon* in the Communion of the Sick. Cardwell's *Two Books of Comm. Pr.* 370. vestry of York Minster. Dugdale's *Brief Historical Account of the Cathedrals of York, &c.* Lond. 1715. p. 26.

^b Inventory of effects in the

not enjoined, in the communion exhortation provided for a congregation negligent of the sacrament. Prayer for the dead appears in the eucharistic-consecration-prayer, or canon, and in the burial-office. Extreme unction was allowed to sick persons desirous of it, and an appropriate prayer for the purpose is appended to the visitation-office. Uction was also prescribed at baptism and confirmation. The old abuse, however, of communions without communicants, which had proved so prolific of error, was forbidden, and hopes were entertained of shaming it out of countenance in cathedrals and large churches, by finding receivers daily among the numerous establishments connected with them.

Such very temperate and cautious variations from the old Romish system naturally satisfied most moderate men. But many of the more determined Protestants were dissatisfied, and especially such of them as had correspondence abroad. A considerable infusion of continental feeling soon became inevitable; foreigners being invited over to fill university professorships, probably from the known scarcity of competent natives friendly to the Reformation. Hence the new service-book no sooner came into general use, than it found some formidable opponents. Among them was the young king, who had fallen into hands violently hostile to Romanism. Cranmer was averse from any change, but he thought it politic to yield. In consequence, there was a careful review of the service-book, and a new one was brought into use by act of parliament, on All-Saints' day, 1552. It has been thought by divines of the Laudian and non-

juring schools anything rather than an improvement upon the book that it superseded. It omits all unctions and prayers for the dead, and lengthens the morning and evening services by adding the sentences, exhortation, general confession, and absolution. To the principal service, no longer called Mass, the Decalogue was added, but the Introit was taken away. The canon, or consecration-prayer, was divided into two portions: an arrangement for which even Romish liturgical authority may be pleaded, as it is said to consist of five parts, or more¹. Of these parts, the first four were formed into a prayer, to follow the offertory. Edward's first book prefaced the entire canon with, "Let us pray for the whole state of Christ's Church:" words which included faithful Christians departed. The second added "Militant here on earth," and thus excluded prayer for the dead: an alteration, which, with the subsequent omission of such prayer in the body of the form, has repeatedly given offence. To the whole communion service was appended a rubric, that this prayer should be used when there is no eucharistic ministration. Still, the former rubric, enjoining, upon such occasions, the use of one or more of the final collects, was allowed to remain. To account for this inconsistency, Bishop Beveridge suggests that a preparation was always to be made for administering the sacrament, and that the priest was only to desist from going on with the service, when he found none ready to communicate with him¹. This

¹ Durant. *De Ritibus Eccl. Cath.* Rom. 1591, p. 416.

¹ *Necessity and Advantage of frequent Communion.* Works, i. 558.

view is confirmed apparently by a rubric in the first service-book, which directs, that "the parishioners of every parish shall offer every Sunday, at the time of the offertory, the just value and price of the holy loaf, (with all such money and other things as were wont to be offered with the same,) to the use of their pastors and curates, and that in such order and course as they were wont to find and pay the said holy loaf^k." In Romish times, these provisions were always needed for the sacrament, for although the people very seldom received, the priest regularly did. But we can easily suppose that human ingenuity about evasions of money-payments did not sleep, when there was no receiving at all. The reviewers, therefore, of the service-book might feel themselves called upon to protect the clergy from pecuniary loss, and at the same time to impress the nation with a conviction, that nothing was farther from their intention than to discourage eucharistic celebrations. They only wished to rid the church of that inveterate and superstitious abuse which constantly placed communion before the eyes of non-communicants, and made it into a mere stage-play. Gaudy dresses were also abolished: bishops being allowed only a rochet, and inferior clergymen a surplice. There was, indeed, little opportunity left for displaying a cope, as the officiator was to stand on the north side of the table; that word being used instead of altar. The main arrangements for public worship appear to have continued unaltered. There were three

^k Cardwell, 314.

services, therefore, as before, on Sundays and holy-days, two shorter than any now in use by six or seven prayers and the benediction, at the two ends of the day, and one, consisting of litany, communion-office, and sermon, in the forenoon.

As Elizabeth revived Edward's second book with some alterations, that is really the liturgical standard of the Church of England, as to doctrine. There have been divines, at intervals, giving a preference to the first book, but such of its principles as are not embodied in the second, have no claim to reception by members of the Anglican communion. The three prayers following the third collect at morning and evening prayers, with the benediction, were added by Elizabeth's authority; the fourth, that for the royal family, was then unnecessary. These additions are not, however, found in prayer-books anterior to 1661, before the end of the litany, though Shepherd thinks them to have been read on days when that service was not used¹. In some particulars, the queen's book made approaches towards her brother's first. The dresses prescribed in it were again enjoined, and its cautious treatment of the real presence was revived, by inserting its mention of the Saviour's body and blood in delivering the sacramental elements, and by omitting the protestation of the second book against adoration of the eucharist. This protestation remained excluded until Charles II.^m On the other hand,

¹ *Elucidation of the Com. Pr.* | ^m Wheatly, 329.
i. 288.

prayer for the dead was formally renounced in an additional set of homilies^a. But altogether, none of the contending parties could deny Elizabeth's book to be a very judicious compromise. Its good effects upon Romish partialities were shown by a general conformity, and with little or no appearance of dissatisfaction, during the queen's first five years^b. Nor until another space of the same length had passed, were secessions at all numerous. An English Roman Catholic body was not formed, until after the pope's deposing bull appeared in 1570, and it did not acquire an aspect of permanence until the Jesuits came over after the lapse of another ten years. Among Protestants, exceptions were unhappily taken to Elizabeth's compromise at an earlier period. Most of those who had found refuge abroad from the Marian persecution, returned with an abhorrence of Popery that would hear of no respect for the prejudices of its professors.

These violent antipathies fastened at first upon clerical habits. Both the dresses prescribed for ministration, and for the ordinary appearance of clergymen in public, were denounced as positively unlawful, because they were derived from the Romish system. Hence the gaudy robes enjoined in King Edward's first book for communion offices, and revived by the act of uniformity, were soon driven out of sight. It was useless to think of gorgeous copes and vestments, while a plain surplice maintained its ground with extreme difficulty. The general disappearance of

^a Third Hom. concerning Prayer. | to Walsingham. Aug. 11, 1570.
Oxf. ed. 1802, p. 283. | Pref. to Heylin's *Ecclesia Vindicata*.

^b Queen Elizabeth's Instructions

more showy ministering habits was, probably, justified by uncontradicted appeals to royal authority. In the act of uniformity, the queen was empowered, with advice of her commissioners, to make new regulations upon clerical attire. The 30th of her Injunctions prescribes the use of "such seemly habits, garments, and such square caps as were most commonly and orderly received in the latter year of King Edward VI^r." This regulation really appears to concern only the dress of clergymen in ordinary life, but men might choose to understand it as including habits for officiating, and a desire to still the strife that raged so furiously, might incline the ruling powers to acquiesce in silence under the interpretation. It had the effect of causing ecclesiastics under the episcopal degree, to wear at most, in their ministrations, a plain surplice^a. This practice was recognised in the *Advertisements*, promulgated in 1564, with a certain degree of authority, though not with enough to render them absolutely binding. They restrict copes to sacramental offices in cathedrals, and collegiate churches, and prescribe surplices only for all other occasions there, and for every ritual occasion elsewhere^r. The times were, however, unfavourable even to this degree of possession, and copes appear generally to have been laid aside, Heylin says, "I know not by what fatal negligence^s." The chapter of Canterbury had sold their's in 1573^t. As concessions to Romish prejudice, their use un-

^a Sparrow's *Collection*. 77.

^r Bishop Madox's *Vindication*. 90.

^s Sparrow's *Collection*. 126.

^t Introduction to the *Life of Laud*. 7.

^u Strype's *Parker*. ii. 301.

doubtedly was wholly gone when Jesuitic management moulded the stronger papal partialities into a party that repudiated Protestantism altogether. Moderate churchmen might see, therefore, no occasion for continuing them any longer, and look upon their surrender as a peace-offering likely to preserve externals of a less ambitious kind.

Elizabeth's reign effectually leavened England with Puritanism, but after a struggle that has brought discredit upon both the contending parties. It was not, however, unproductive of good. Men were effectually weaned, in the course of it, from superstitious formalism, and indolent confidence in sacerdotal privileges. They gained also those habits of observing duly the Lord's day, which have done incalculable service to the country. Under James the puritanical element soon received a check. A few alterations were made, indeed, in the church-service, to meet objections advanced against it at Hampton court, but Bancroft, who took the see of Canterbury, towards the close of 1604, soon enforced a degree of conformity long unknown. Among the more conspicuous evidences of this, was the re-appearance of copes in cathedral and collegiate churches. They are prescribed for such establishments, at communion offices, in the canons enacted under Bancroft's presidency while the primacy was vacant^u, and are generally mentioned among furniture to be provided for the larger churches and the royal chapels, during the first two Stuart reigns. They are still worn by the prebendaries of

^u Can. 24.

Westminster at coronations, and the propriety of their appearance at such rare and grand ceremonials, or at any similar displays of wealth connected with religion, few will, probably, dispute. For ordinary purposes, their use is gone. Such pageantry has no chance of shaking Romish prepossessions, and Protestants would commonly consider it unbefitting the sobriety of public worship. The use of copes in parish-churches is, indeed, placed by another canon^{*} on rather questionable ground, surplices to be provided at the parochial charge, with hoods for graduates, being alone prescribed in reading prayers, and administering sacraments, or other rites. The more gaudy dress is not, however, forbidden, and can plead the rubric, which is statutably binding. Copes, accordingly, seem to have been adopted by some of the parochial clergy, under Charles I., three London incumbents, in 1640, being accused of administering the sacrament in them[†].

Never could such a step have been more indiscreetly taken. But Puritanism was then so rampant that it produced a recoil which seems to have bewildered its opponents. Unhappily their leader was Archbishop Laud, whose many very valuable qualities were balanced by a want of temper and caution that rendered him quite unfit for prominence in times like his. They required skilful management and exemplary moderation, but he was exactly the man, when sorely pressed by one extreme, to run headlong upon the other. Instead of striving to baffle the encroaching spirit of Puritanism, by quietly slackening

^{*} Can. 58.

| [†] Heylin's *Laud*. 471.

its movements, conciliating its leaders, and seeking palliatives for its objections, he seems to have considered it capable of being overborne by violence, and to have built upon a general conversion of the Roman Catholics as the peculiar glory of his primacy. One of his objects, according to Heylin, was "to settle the Church of England upon the first principles and positions of her reformation:" another was, "to gain Papists to the church, by removing all such blocks and obstacles as had been laid before them by the Puritan faction^{*}." Of these views, the former was neither warily nor temperately pursued, and the latter was visionary. But he was not a man to see any reason for suspecting unsoundness in either of them, and conscious integrity made him overlook his liability to indiscretion. Hence he involved himself in difficulties that might have been lessened, if not altogether avoided, and retarded reforms, which, being real improvements, more moderate men subsequently carried almost without opposition. He found churches and communion-tables treated with an irreverence of which later generations would have been ashamed; and objections to receive the sacrament at the rails, quite as strong as they would now be to receive at any other place^a. He could not, however, be contented with moderate objects. Hence he rendered obvious amendments unpopular, by coupling them with frivolous formalities, and injudicious advances towards Rome. The soundness of his own convictions against that see's encroachments, and worst corrup-

^{*} Heylin's *Laud*. 417.

| ^a Kennet's *Complete Hist.* iii. 67.

tions is, indeed, unquestionable, but he allowed expectations of his patronage to be built upon a divinity very likely to betray inferior minds into the papal meshes. No change, therefore, could emanate from him, or receive his sanction without being branded as a *superstitious innovation*^b. Heylin maintains that he only attempted *renovations*^c; and that the odious first syllable was put upon them by "those who out of cunning and design had long disused them." The archbishop himself, with a gravity that became him, avoided the alliteration, and styled them *restorations*^d. This word is not only more dignified, but also more politic, as it must have been often very difficult to convict contemporaries of departure from precedents that had actually been before them. To impugn their practice, it would be generally found necessary to fall back upon some more distant period. But, whatever might be the most correct designation of Laud's reforms, they were novelties to the existing generation, and violently crossed its prejudices. Men were haunted by an excessive and intolerant antipathy to Romanism. This might, perhaps, have been moderated by discreet additions to the decency of public worship, and by shewing the papal church a front firmly but liberally opposed. It was exasperated by persevering attempts to revive every form for which any authority, tolerably producible, could be found, and by attempts made by divines of considerable figure to reconcile Romish principles with Protestantism. Hence, when

^b Heylin's *Laud*. 505.

^c *Ib.* 417.

^d *History of the Troubles and*

Tryal of Archbishop Laud. Lond.
1695. p. 156.

the upper house, in 1641, appointed a sub-committee to consult upon religious questions, doctrinal innovations first came under its notice. Popular members of the house of commons had, indeed, rendered it necessary to take this course^c. "Some complained that all the tenets of the council of Trent had, by one or other, been preached and printed, abating only such points of state-popery against the king's supremacy, made treason by the statute. Good works co-causes with faith, by justification; private confession by particular enumeration of sins, needful, *necessitate medii*, to salvation; that the oblation, or as others, the consumption of the elements in the Lord's Supper, holdeth the nature of a true sacrifice, prayers for the dead, lawfulness of monastical vows, the gross substance of Arminianism, and some dangerous points of Socinianism^f." The learned and exemplary Lancelot Andrewes, who died bishop of Winchester in 1626, was led by deep study of ecclesiastical antiquity, to furnish authority for some of those approaches towards Romanism which did so much harm under Charles I. But his own movements, though always, if justified by established precedent, in the direction of antiquated forms, were most cautiously made, and rather earned a character of superstition for himself, than provoked opposition from others^g. His professed admirers proved quite unequal to restrain or modify the impulse communicated by him to theology. They disgusted the great majority of Protestants by trimming their way close to the papal confines, and led Romanists

^c *Parl. Hist.* ix, 103, 109.

^g *Ib.* 127.

^f Fuller. *Ch. Hist.* b. 11, p. 175.

into a belief that if Puritanism were suppressed, England would soon cease to be a Protestant country^h. Every reason to believe that anxiety for its suppression was uppermost in the minds of leading men was given by those who licensed books for printing. But, like almost every measure of authority in that unhappy age, restrictions upon the press recoiled fiercely upon the party that so indiscreetly used the power of imposing them. Books gladly passed by the examiners did little more than confirm a few clergymen in preconceived opinions, while refusals to license attacks upon Popery, or upon divinity akin to it, were branded as creatures of a spirit more arbitrary and insidious than that which prepares a Roman expurgatory indexⁱ.

Among the demands of Laud's generation, and of one or two besides that immediately preceded it, was that of more than one full Sunday service. It had been the usage of England, as it is yet of foreigners, both Protestant and Romish, to make the Lord's day evening a season for amusement. Puritanism was hostile to this arrangement, claiming the entire Sunday for a respite from all the grosser purposes of life, whether serious or gay, but surrendering unreservedly the festivals to human industry. The notion was, that so much time as even the reformed system had appropriated to piety and relaxation could not be spared in most cases from the calls of business, and that a few days in which religion really predominated were more spiritually serviceable than a greater

^h *Parl. Hist.* ix, 100.

| ⁱ *Ib.* 146.

number in which it was ordinarily the handmaid of pleasure. There were, of course, many, especially among the young, who revolted from this opinion, and James I., in passing through Lancashire, was struck with its unfavourable operation upon the Protestant cause. The Romish clergy took advantage of the impatience with which many bore the loss of amusements, once freely conceded, to paint reformed theology as a morose enemy to the harmless enjoyments of mankind. James was hence induced in May, 1618, to publish a proclamation, commonly known as *The Book of Sports*, authorising amusements on Sundays, under certain restrictions. It was meant for reading in churches, but Archbishop Abbot, being at Croydon, when it was to be read there, flatly forbade it. The king winked at his interference, and being probably informed that farther opposition might be expected, prudently allowed the whole matter to sink silently into oblivion¹. In 1633, Charles I. revived this proclamation with an addition, in which bishops were enjoined to have it published throughout their several dioceses. Many of the clergy, objecting to this, were suspended, or deprived, and the whole transaction acted most unfortunately both upon the church and government. It tended, however, to confirm the country in habits of keeping Sunday with considerable strictness, and thus to break up the original system of a principal and secondary services. Men would not be satisfied without a sermon when they came to church, and, as the rubric did not prescribe one in the

¹ Heylin's *Presbyterians*, 384. Cardwell's *Documentary Annals*, ii, 188.

afternoon, they gladly paid lecturers out of their own pockets to preach it. Unhappily this proved another source of collision with the constituted authorities. Every difficulty and discouragement was placed in the way of the lecturers, as their friends said, both because they were able and willing to expose Arminianism, and because time enough must be left for a ball, or some other such desecration of Sunday evening. To meet this latter objection, the afternoon service was to be lengthened by catechizing, and sermons were to be allowed, if only connected with that duty. Puritanical clergymen, however, pronounced any mere pedagogue sufficient for a catechist, and rendered sermons, ostensibly built upon the catechism, little different from their ordinary discourses. Hence even these catechetical lectures were discouraged, and church instruction, on a Sunday afternoon, was confined as closely as possible within the trammels of question and answer. Among the follies to which the dislike of afternoon sermons gave birth, was a disposition to disparage preaching altogether. The duty of prayer was pressed upon the people by some of the clergy in such a manner as to throw instruction from the pulpit into the shade. Even the pulpit itself supplied facilities for attacking its own usefulness. Hence John Williams, eventually Archbishop of York, said, in a visitation charge, delivered in 1634, while he was Bishop of Lincoln, "It is a new monster that preachers should preach against preaching^k." All such endeavours, however, proved utterly vain; or, perhaps, rather con-

^k Hacket's *Life of Archbishop Williams*. Lond. 1715. p. 158.

firmed people in demanding the instruction that was so injudiciously depreciated, and, wherever possible, denied. People would not rest contented with an endless round of ritual formalities. Expectations of a sermon at every Sunday duty continually gained strength, rendering by degrees the original system of a principal and two subordinate services irreconcilable with national feeling. An importance, like that reserved by Romanists for mass, was desired in all the public devotions of a Sunday.

This arrangement was promoted by the liturgical alterations that succeeded the Savoy conference, in 1661. Evening prayer was then begun, like morning, with the sentences, exhortation, confession, and absolution. To both services likewise were appended the four prayers and benediction, which had hitherto been found only at the end of the litany. There was, therefore, no longer any pretence for omitting them either at morning or evening service. Farther additions were made in giving a permanent place to the prayer for parliament, used occasionally under Charles I., and in providing the prayer *for all sorts and conditions of men*, together with the general thanksgiving. Thus the evening service was considerably lengthened; but there is reason to doubt whether one prayer, now universally used in it, that *for all sorts and conditions of men*, was originally meant for it. Bishop Gunning, the supposed author of that prayer, would not allow it to be read in the chapel of the college over which he presided, St. John's, Cambridge, in the evening; the litany, for which it is a substitute, being prescribed only for

mornings¹. The omission has not, however, continued any where, and a sermon being also common on Sunday afternoons, and evenings too, when there is service, the public worship of England in the latter parts of the day has altogether a very different character from that which it bore in Romish times, and of which Edward's rubrics contemplate the continuance. Nor is there any option of returning to this original form; the liturgical additions being statutably imposed by Charles's act of uniformity, and bishops being empowered recently to enforce even a second sermon^m. Much need not be said of these departures from the old rubrical system. Public opinion demands them, and certainly with great propriety. England now would not be found more friendly to a *Book of Sports* than she was under the first two Stuarts. All ranks require for Sunday a character consistently religious, and hence expect worship of considerable length whenever, on that holy day, the churches are opened. Nor are services without sermons ever found satisfactory. On the contrary, there are such as prefer the national religion, and generally frequent it, who will go to meeting when prayers only are to be heard at church. It would be idle to suppose that such a feeling can be rooted out of the country. Dissenting teachers are sufficient for keeping it alive, and even vigorous. But its vitality and efficiency do not depend upon dissent. Churchmen commonly are quite aware of the inestimable benefits conferred upon mankind

¹ Wheatly, 182.

^m 1 and 2 Vict. cap. 106, clause 80.

by preaching, and would fear the prevalence of a heartless or superstitious formalism, if pulpits did not constantly inform the understandings, and arouse the sleepy apprehensions of mankind. Whatever may, therefore, hastily be thought, it seems most unlikely that a general return either to the principles or the practices of Edward's reign, especially to those which guided the compilation of his first service-book, is even possible. Among obvious difficulties in the way of a return to such antiquated usages, is the time now prescribed by statute for the publication of banns. Abroad, we hear them published, in Romish churches from the pulpit, when the clergyman goes up to preach, during the communion service, or mass. Probably, the same habit prevailed in England anciently, and hence any particulars respecting it were deemed unnecessary by those who compiled the liturgy. The original rubrics, accordingly, merely enjoin the publication of banns, on three succeeding Sundays, or holy-days, during service-time. But ancient practices were overthrown in the civil wars, which might occasion the direction that appeared, after the last review, to publish banns immediately before the offertory, that is, at the old time. The marriage-act, however, enjoins this publication after the second lesson. Now, the principal one of the old rubrical services has no lessons, and matins, or the morning service, would, probably, if restored, begin about eight o'clock, or earlier, in the morning. At such an hour, no large attendance could be expected; a return, therefore, to rubrical practice, would here nullify the legislative wish to secure pub-

licity. The church, as in Romish countries, would **not** receive its full congregation, until the litany began, as precursor of the communion-service and sermon, about eleven. Thus matrimonial announcements, made three or four hours before, would commonly find much of the concealment that is often desired in such cases, but which is, upon many accounts, very far from desirable. A remedy for this difficulty has been suggested in the double publication of banns, once, according to statute, after the second lesson, and subsequently, according to the rubric, after the Nicene creedⁿ. But negligence would often interfere with this twofold care, and private considerations occasionally, even if all the clergy were agreed as to the propriety of change. Such unanimity is not, however, to be expected at any time, and has rarely seemed more hopeless than in the case of recent proposals to alter the church-service. Difficulties, therefore, about the publication of banns, are alone sufficient to call for legislative interference, if a strict rubrical system were attempted. Its partial revival is liable to many objections, which can easily be seen, but not specified, or even urged in a general way, without invidiousness, and risk of offence. It may, however, be allowably said in defence of immemorial possession, that it is not likely to have been established on slight and insufficient grounds. The soundness of this presumption has been signally shown in the case of our liturgical usages. Attempts to find a legal standing for

ⁿ Scobell's *Few Thoughts on Church Subjects*. Lond. 1843. p. 4.

several proposed alterations, have had a degree of ill success, that was little anticipated in any quarter, when such matters were first narrowly examined.

Should materials exist, and be eventually discovered, for rendering this examination complete in all its parts, a bare return to the system that it might disclose, could satisfy no party. Indifferent observers would despise a mere transition from one set of forms to another more elaborate. Those who really desired the change, and had laboured for it, would at least require the divinity of Laud's partisans, to accompany his formalities. They might even go farther, and struggle for such approaches to Rome as very few Englishmen have contemplated before the late reaction in her favour. Indications of a leaning this way lately have not been wanting. An importance has been given to the Fathers which the Church of England, fairly heard, refuses, and which the writings of these ancient divines will not substantiate. It is true, that in 1571, the upper house of convocation signed some canons, chiefly prepared by Archbishop Parker, and the Bishops Cox and Horne, which inhibit preachers from delivering any doctrine but such as is agreeable to the Bible, and "collected out of it by the Fathers and ancient bishops." These canons were not, however, signed by the lower house, or authorized by the crown, and the restriction upon preaching merely goes to restrain hasty and unscholarly men from assuming the sense of scripture without any warrant from established authority. It can obviously have no

* Sparrow's *Collection*, 238. Strype's *Parker*, ii. 60.

neutralizing effect upon the sixth article, which, with all its fellows, that very convocation expressly approved, and which denies any doctrine's claim to belief, unless it "is read in Scripture, and can be proved thereby." The Church of England has no other standards of doctrine than Scripture, and her own formularies. She does not send men for articles of faith to the multitudinous, various, rhetorical, and perplexing pages of the *Fathers*°. In this enormous mass of obsolete erudition are to be found proofs, such as they are, of every point in Popery, and of the millennium besides, with other things which now nobody believes. Reference, therefore, to the *Fathers*, for any doctrine which cannot be established by the Bible, Liturgy, and Articles, is altogether irrelevant on the part of any member of the Anglican communion. Without such reference, however, freely conceded, there is no prospect of that doctrinal revolution in England which is necessary to preserve a ritual revolution from utter contempt. People must be drawn over to a considerable degree of the reliance upon sacramental acts, religious formalities, and private sacerdotal intervention, which give life to Romanism, before they will value new and more operose externals. This reliance could, however, be only founded upon a deference for tradition which the general information, independent spirit, and cool sense of Englishmen, would soon shew to be hopeless. The experiment has been tried since Laud's miserable time. Attempts were made in favour of a theology looking

° See Daille's *Right Use of the Fathers*, a very useful book, which was reprinted with improvements by the Rev. G. Jekyll, in 1841.

towards Rome, by the non-jurors, a hundred years and more, ago. They were commonly learned men, and their party was formed by distinguished sufferers for conscience' sake. Still, all their exertions failed: or, if they had any effect at all, it was only the disadvantageous one, of discrediting high-church views and the information to sustain them. Upon the religious apathy that followed, arose the successful movements of Wesley and Whitfield, which professed connection with the church, and hence extensively annihilated most of the coarser objections to it. The labours of these remarkable men have added, however, greatly to the difficulties of giving a semi-Romish complexion to the religion of England. They have, indeed, effectually cured people generally of violent antipathies to prayer-book, surplice, and episcopacy, but they have left unaffected a prevailing disposition to question religious formalism, inherent sacerdotal privileges, and overstrained ecclesiastical authority.

A century passed under such influences has undoubtedly strengthened the Church of England, but it has done nothing towards the acquisition of a clerical importance, now scarcely found even in countries which have been denied the light of Protestant information. Men are now decidedly unfavourably to the priestly power of former times, not only on account of its tendency to engross worldly objects, but also from spiritual considerations. People of liberal minds readily do homage to professional talent, and industry, but have little respect for claims to extraordinary and unascertainable spiritual prerogatives. However this tone of the public mind may be regretted by a few

spirits enamoured of the dark ages, its existence is undeniable, and prospect of overcoming it there is really none. It can, in fact, reckon upon support, more or less, from the whole dissenting body, the church-party called evangelical, the political circles, most lay churchmen, and a majority of the more influential clergy. No exertions of a serious kind to master this formidable opposition, could be made without considerable danger. Not only would such efforts unsettle ordinary minds by making a fresh class of demands upon acquiescence, but also they are very open to colourable misrepresentation. When clergymen magnify sacramental efficacy, and claim its ministration, as their own indefeasible right, it is plain, that, however innocently, they are pleading for themselves. The next step, in such a course, is to demand the power of persecution. If mere ordination is to concern mankind so vitally, surely those who have this incalculable advantage, ought with it to have the means of compelling reluctant spirits to come within its range. Such objections to a movement, essentially sacerdotal, may seem the mere dreamy foresight of a studious recluse, when politics do not bear heavily upon the church. But let a different scene present itself, and positions, now gravely drawn from Fathers, and other long-forgotten sources, with no sinister design, will be paraded as irrefragable proofs of a clerical conspiracy against the liberties and purses of mankind. All the learning that some have thought so likely to regenerate the country, will be denounced at once as artful nonsense dragged from its hiding-places by shallow vanity, restless ambition, or sordid

selfishness. England enjoys just now a happy respite from the bitterness and fever of party strife. Therefore clergymen may magnify their ministerial commission, without provoking any more serious accusation than that of claiming a visionary importance for their own order. But seasons of tranquillity are seldom of any long continuance in this country. From the denseness of its population, it must always teem with distress and difficulty, which never exceed the average amount, without producing unusual clamour. Then obloquy falls immediately upon the clergy. The wealth possessed by them as a body tempts cupidity, their admittance to superior society provokes the envy of haughty success, excluded from it, their sedative influence over lower life makes them hateful to political incendiaries. Very few years, accordingly, have passed, since the higher clergy shrank, and with great reason, from contact with a misguided populace. They were desirous of giving up their habitual distinctions of appearance, and to pass unnoticed through the busy crowd of men. No sensible man doubts that such a time may soon recur. Materials for bringing it back are, indeed, storing up every day, in spite of the comparative peace which England now enjoys. Why make it more difficult to stem a new tide of clerical unpopularity, by giving revolutionary politicians a colourable pretence for denouncing the whole ecclesiastical body as a mass of selfish hypocrites? Claims and principles, which really are the offspring of nothing worse than harmless vanity, mistaken zeal, and misdirected learning would readily supply materials for a specious charge of priestcraft. The charge would

eagerly be made, and industriously supported by many who did not half believe its truth. Nor would an excited people generally refuse it acquiescence, until its accuracy should be sufficiently examined. Charles the First's clerical supporters were hunted down amid sweeping cries of Popery and Arminianism. After times may hence learn the danger of supplying enemies with effective materials for inflaming popular prejudice.

The church, at present, really has no temptation thus to find weapons for using against herself. Laud's indiscretions were provoked by a hostile party within her bosom, and by various irregularities that required correction. The religious party, however, that gave so much trouble then, has left no exact successor: its theology having descended upon men, who respect established discipline, and externals of every kind, if only sanctioned by immemorial usage. Nor are the decencies of churches, or of public worship, any where disregarded. Undoubtedly there is an extensive prevalence of dissent, especially in towns, chiefly among the lower sections of middle life. But a large population is never likely to be free from considerable differences of religious opinion, without an Inquisition, or something like one. The classes, too, most fruitful in dissent, are extensively pervaded by cramped but aspiring spirits, that require ministers nearer their own condition and habits, than are the great majority of clergymen. Still, notwithstanding every element of nonconformity that English society supplies, there is a general preference for the national religion. Estrangement from it has more flowed, perhaps, from the want of church-room, than from any other single cause.

Men did not cease to worship as their fathers had done before them, because they thought those fathers wrong, but because they had not sufficient opportunity of treading in their steps. Population increased with surprising rapidity, and scarcely any additional means of religious instruction were provided within the establishment, beyond the occasional erection of a proprietary chapel. Hence many engaged seats at meeting, merely because they could find no room at church; and many more, whose preference for their ancestral faith was not so decided, would, notwithstanding, have attended its ordinances, had it been readily within their power. For the great mass in crowded towns, scarcely any accommodation could be afforded in the churches; and as inferior life is commonly neither satisfied with nonconformity, nor willing to pay for religious instruction, it became extensively overspread with infidelity. The country was, however, at length aroused to the duty of church building, and adherents to the national religion multiply quite as fast as places for their accommodation. To keep these places full, and increase their number, nothing more is wanted than a continuance of that ministerial zeal, and professional ability, which have long been regularly upon the increase among the clergy. That any useful end would be answered by a great addition to public worship, merely liturgical, may well be doubted. National habits and opinions are not favourable to an engrossing round of ritual formalities, nor is the continued efficiency of such a system a matter of reasonable calculation. It has been tried, and has failed. Another trial would, probably, have the same result. As hopes

of its beneficial operation on the public die away, it must be found an irksome charge, and bring discredit on the church by the slovenliness and irregularity of its performance. Clergymen, like all the world besides, need restraint and stimulus, from publicity. Let ministrations be exacted from them in churches empty, or nearly so, and a stray visitor, or angry neighbour, will furnish, every now and then, some ill-natured but well-founded picture of their negligence. For their own credit alone, therefore, they will do wisely to distrust a Romish estimate of religious forms which scarcely any body will attend. The papal school is, indeed, little fitted for teaching much to clergymen more valuable than certain branches of worldly policy. The principles and practices of Rome are incurably distasteful to the great majority of Englishmen. Any thing, therefore, that savours of regret for the high Protestant character, in which the country justly glories, would paralyze its Christian liberality, and throw away the advantages which the church has gained, and is gaining, over nonconformity.

A disposition to romanise would also, if not checked in time, produce fresh divisions in the church. During several years, party spirit among her members has been losing breadth and intensity. On one side, doctrine has gained a prominence which was rarely seen in divines, then called high-church, forty years ago; on the other, an anxiety has been shewn to maintain a character of genuine churchmanship. Thus the two parties, which were in active opposition to each other, within the memory of even young men, have settled down together on friendly terms of mutual

forbearance and respect. Besides, indeed, a common acquiescence in established formularies, they think alike upon various subjects fundamentally important. They agree in excluding tradition from an eminence that would overshadow the Bible, and are equally unanimous in placing externals immeasurably below vital religion. An entire agreement between them seems unlikely, there being several questions on which their views considerably differ. The probability, therefore, is, that a continuance of recent controversies would occasion a new party among professors of the national religion. Of this evil, if it should really overtake the country, the innovators must wholly bear the blame. They have suddenly made a call for various changes in public worship, of which no one suspected the least necessity, and very few can see any now; which are obnoxious besides to the great majority of churchmen. They could not fairly, therefore, complain of a reluctance to obey such a call, even if it involved no more than an increase, and rearrangement of mere formalities. In every thing, human nature dislikes needless interference. But, in this case, unimportant forms are not alone at stake. Among those who would urge them forward is a writer who expresses a desire "to unprotestantise the national church." Many who now seek external changes have, probably, no such extraordinary and suspicious inclination; but with some of their leaders it is otherwise, and, after all, the bulk of men in every party are

^p In the *British Critic*, for July, 1841. See Bird's *Plea for the Reformed Church*, Lond. 1841, p. 8; and the same Author's *Defence of the Principles of the English Reformation*, Lond. 1843, p. 2.

goaded on to action by a few stirring spirits. Hence opinions are often taken up with little foresight of the consequences to which intemperate partisans are impelling them. But when men are fairly committed in a cause, pride will commonly keep them in adherence to it, although principles are gradually developed little in accordance with many of their original views and intentions. Experience, therefore, justifies those whose just perception of their spiritual privileges keeps above a thought of *unprotestantising* England, in declining any concessions to such as can talk thus wildly. The language may flow from an individual's rashness, but it reveals a feeling that has fastened on his party. This really has advanced many notions tending to undermine the sound Protestantism of England. Such therefore, as know the value of a faith purely scriptural are bound to protect its hold on the less informed, by declining to follow in the wake of those who are artfully or blindly steering towards Rome. They are not justified in swelling the importance of divines who turn that way, even by accepting them, without sufficient examination, as ritual authorities. They have seen, however, little or no reason for such a deference as this, inconsiderable as it is; attempts to convict existing ritual usages of unauthorised innovation having generally failed^a. If recent movements, therefore, should maintain their ground, a schism like that of the non-jurors, or one more favourable to Popery, may be apprehended. Undoubtedly

^a A great deal of information on this subject is very well brought together in Robertson's *How shall* | *we Conform to the Liturgy of the Church of England?* Lond. 1843.

it would be likely to dwindle soon away; but not until it had effected serious mischief. The established religion has been rapidly, but securely gaining efficiency and popularity, during several years. A new division in its adherents must act upon it disadvantageously. There is room, however, for hoping, that so great a misfortune may even yet be avoided. The recent movement is essentially sacerdotal, and has, therefore, but little prospect of gaining any great popularity among the better-informed laity. As this becomes more felt, and the unsoundness of much that has been put forth by the innovating party, becomes better known, a disposition to rally around well-considered principles may rise like a tutelary genius to the nation's view. If it should prove so, a compact body of innovating partisans will never gain a defensible position, and after a few years of unavailing struggle, the whole movement may leave no trace of its existence out of libraries.

If a new party, should, however, arise within the church, on the ruins of ancient prejudices, against Romanism, the recent reaction will have proved a national misfortune. Posterity may say, that we have rushed from one extreme to the other. There is really, however, no reason for such inconsistency. Opposition to the papal system may have been pushed, in former years, to unwarrantable lengths; but it always rested upon solid ground. Romanists have never been able to make any satisfactory defence of their peculiarities. The more prominent and popular portion of them is undefended, and all the rest can find no better champions than mysti-

fication and evasion. Hence there is no reason to follow, or even to fear, the papal church. Nor is there the slightest hope of any concessions from her. The Vatican's numerous and severe humiliations have left it still able to resist. Approaches to its tricrowned lord, must be, therefore, made not with a delusive hope of obtaining terms, but in a disposition to follow at his bidding. But it may be reasonably asked, Why should any terms be sought with Rome? What offer can she make worthy of a Protestant's acceptance? His church is built upon the rock of Scripture, the papal on the quicksands of tradition. There is a firmness, therefore, in Protestant arguments, which Romanists may envy, but must seek in vain. Arguments, however, that have this quality must be really Protestant, not swerving from their holy bearing and stern resolve under the fascination of meretricious blandishments, wafted from the seven celebrated hills. While a stand is firmly taken on the Bible, and tradition treated merely as a useful handmaid, no Romish artifice or learning will be found of much avail. But papal weapons can seldom be wielded well by any other than papal hands. Here and there, a Protestant can turn them successfully against Rome. They are far too numerous, miscellaneous and ambiguous, for much use by the great bulk of those who would escape error themselves, or be free from the imputation of leading others into it. Let an English churchman, therefore, turn away from every doctrine as "erroneous and strange,"

* *Ordering of Priests.* Engl. Com. Pr.

which is not unquestionably revealed in Scripture, and clearly embodied in the formularies of his venerable church. When these authorities are wanting, to plead a sanction from the Fathers is illusory and idle. The ponderous and all-but interminable tomes of ancient theology have, unquestionably rendered important services to the church, in establishing discipline and convicting of innovation. As doctrinal authorities, independent of Scripture, or in forced concurrence with it, they have done incalculable mischief. It was to relieve God's undoubted word from such sacrilegious tyranny that Luther and his followers unravelled the web which school-divinity had woven. It was to keep its toils from entangling Englishmen any more, that Cranmer, Ridley, Parker, Jewel, gave them the protection of our Liturgy, Articles, and Homilies.

The return of England generally to Rome is rendered, probably, by her long possession of these invaluable safeguards, quite impossible. Nor is the country by any means ready to receive a semi-Romish system of religion. But human objections to trouble affect religious questions, as they do all others. Hence a considerable section of the people might be gradually won over, if pains were not taken to keep men above such a fascination, to a public worship with more formality, and theatrical effect than have hitherto been usual. Even less difficulty might be found in extending a reliance for salvation, upon sacraments and ceremonies administered by the church. The ignorant sick now commonly prefer a clergyman's reading to his conversation. Hence numbers might be brought easily to think little of spiritual danger, if they could

only obtain extreme unction, or go through any other ritual formality. A vicarious religion, in which the soul is quietly considered as almost entirely under the keeping of the priesthood, and very much in its power; has, indeed, many charms for man. Scripture gives, however, no countenance to such enchanting dreams, but sternly rests spiritual safety upon a thorough change of mind. Men are, therefore, to be plainly warned against an indolent and superstitious confidence in outward forms. They require to be trained in habits of thinking everything undone, until a mighty change is wrought in their inward frames. When this point is gained, hallowed rites are beneficial; trust in them before is very likely to betray the soul. The Church of England has hitherto wisely steered between dissenting neglect, and Romish over value, of externals. Deviation from this discreet and happy course would cause division among the well-informed and disputatious, among the weak and ignorant, a blind and illusive dependence upon ordinances. Evils like these would make the acquisition of more kindly feelings towards Romanism, indeed a costly purchase. But opposition to it may advantageously become more liberal, discreet, and courteous, if it only continue firm and uncompromising as ever. Adherents to the papal church may thus be led away from delusive expectations, and more discerning minds among them may gradually suspect unsoundness in their peculiar principles. But when approaches towards them follow closely upon long-resisted admittance to civil privileges, they may naturally refer former objections to selfishness, rather than conviction. This is one reason why

we should not wish for a return to the very ground which our fathers first took when they left the papal church. Besides, both Edward's and Elizabeth's original arrangements have lost their use, which was the weaning of England from Romanism, and probably could not be restored in their full integrity. An incomplete restoration would be likely to produce new demands. Hence the more prudent course is to leave immemorial usage in undisturbed possession. It has been shown by recent inquiries to have taken no unauthorised position. Few persons, probably, when ritual innovation first came forward, thought it so indifferently provided with a case. But suppose its friends had been more fortunate, it seldom ventures to claim attention, except as a powerful check to Protestant nonconformity. That it would prove so, if the country followed its directions, may well be doubted. Churchmen could hardly take a semi-Romish attitude without giving new advantages to Dissenters. Were genuine Protestant feelings driven from the church, they would take refuge in the meeting, and so augment its power as to endanger those endowments which carry sound religion into every corner of the land. Dissent will mock at assertions of its unlawfulness, however learnedly supported. It knows the impotence of more elaborate externals. It sees its own advantage, when clergymen eager to coquet with Rome, utter graceless and infatuated reflections on the Reformation. Its chief influence over the calmer spirits rests on able preaching, and opponents to be feared, must equal, or surpass it here. With sufficient church-room, and well considered

sermons well delivered, the established religion will ever be found an over-match for nonconformity. The odds would soon be reversed, were clergymen generally to follow the Laudian and nonjuring schools. Vainly would Fathers give their aid, and pains be taken to prove the country's confidence indefeasibly their own. English intelligence, intrenched on the Bible and the Reformation, would receive no doctrine from tradition, or let a ritual yoke weigh down vital religion.

THE END.

BY THE SAME AUTHOR.

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